

Timeframes for Modifying Scheduled Specialty Clinic Visits, Procedures and Elective surgeries during COVID – 19

Date: 3/29/20

Purpose:

To standardize the timeframes during which scheduled care for patients is modified.

This document accompanies the Expected Practice titled “Deferring and Rescheduling Appropriate Visits, Procedures, Surgeries and Tests during COVID-19”

Key Principles:

1. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to create capacity for a surge in emergent cases, all non-essential, currently scheduled specialty clinic visits, procedures and elective surgeries need to be evaluated and, as clinically safe to do so, be rescheduled to a future date.
2. If a patient’s care is deferred, they should be given a new appointment within a clinically appropriate timeframe. If they are not provided an appointment at the time their care is modified, they will be placed on a tracking list. This list will be monitored by each facility’s Outpatient Specialty Director to ensure that the timeframe for care of deferred patients is re-evaluated and, if clinically necessary, their need be accommodated, even in the context of an ongoing COVID-19 surge.

Plan:

1. Essential specialty care that can only be provided in an in-person context should continue, following our current approaches for minimizing the risk of disease transmission.
2. If applicable, modifications in outpatient specialty clinic/procedure/elective surgery schedules (conversion to phone/telemedicine visits, deferral of non-essential care, rescheduling, etc.) should proceed as described:
 - a. At the time of this publication, modifications are recommended through April 19th.
 - i. Some DHS sites have already modified schedules through May 15th or later...if this is already done, it should remain unchanged, but future modifications should follow the timeline below.
 - b. After April 19th, if modifications are still indicated, they will occur in 2-week segments. Facilities have two options for this process:
 - i. “Rolling” – A modification procedure where the modifications are done daily, on a rolling basis, two weeks in advance of the planned service.
 - ii. “Batch” – A modification procedure where the modifications are done as a batch, beginning one week before the 2-week segment.
 - c. A schedule for the next two months is below.

| Time segment for modification | Modification activities should begin no earlier than: |
|--|--|
| Thru April 19 th , 2020 | Immediately |
| April 20 th – May 3 rd | April 6 th (rolling), April 13 th (batch) |
| May 4 th – 17 th | April 20 th (rolling), April 27 th (batch) |
| May 18 th – May 31 st | May 4 th (rolling), May 11 th (batch) |

3. The schedule modification process will be informed by the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak and will continue in the manner above until facilities are notified to stop.